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National Association of Wool Manufacturers.

A VALEDICTORY.

In the Bulletin of the National Association of Wool Manufacturers for March, 1889 the undersigned addressed a salutatory to its members, having recently entered upon his duties as secretary of the organization. Fourteen years have passed, and he now makes use of the same pages to address them a few words of farewell, which may be appropriately introduced by his formal letter of resignation:

BOSTON, MASS., June 9, 1903.

MR. CHARLES H. HARDING, *President, and the Executive Committee, National Association of Wool Manufacturers:*

GENTLEMEN: I have this day taken the oath of office as Director of the United States Census, and in accordance with the resolution of the Executive Committee, at its meeting on March 25 last, I now formally tender my resignation as secretary of the National Association of Wool Manufacturers, to take effect on this day. I shall take occasion, at an early date, to present to the Committee and to the Association some account of my fourteen years' stewardship of this office, and I shall then give expression more formally and fully to my profound appreciation of the too generous treatment I have uniformly received at the hands of the Association, and my deep regret that circumstances have arisen which seem to render it best that relations so long established, so intimate, so dignified, so important, and so con-

genial in every way must now be severed. This much it is proper for me to say at once, in acknowledgment of the resolution adopted by the Executive Committee at the time when it voted to release me from my engagement with the Association. Pending the appointment of my successor, I shall be glad, if desired, to exercise some supervision over the work of the office, including the publication of the Quarterly Bulletin of the Association.

Very respectfully,

S. N. D. North.

The fourteen years of service which this letter terminated cover more than one-third of the life of the National Association of Wool Manufacturers, which was organized at Springfield, Massachusetts, on November 30, 1864, and will have been in existence thirty-nine years on the recurrence of that anniversary.

It is an almost unprecedented experience that a business organization of this character should have had but two secretaries in so long a life. Such a record is indicative of the courtesy and consideration with which this association of business men has always treated its executive officer.

The second of these secretaries acknowledges gratefully and reverently his constant indebtedness to the first. I never saw Dr. John L. Hayes; but he has been an ever present guide and mentor. He left behind him, in the sixteen volumes of the Bulletin which he edited, so complete an exposition of the creed of the Association, so high an ideal of its objects and plan, and so exalted and intense a conception of the influence of protection in American economic development, that his successor had but to follow him faithfully, however far behind, to be sure that he was in the right pathway. The road was blazed for him at every step by a master craftsman.

I have served under four of the seven presidents of the Association. When I entered upon duty, Mr. William Whitman was serving his fifth term in the office from which he retired in 1893, against the protest of all his associates. He was succeeded by the late Hon. Rufus S. Frost, who consented

in that emergency to again assume the duties from which he had retired in 1884, and who died in the office on March 6, 1894. He was succeeded by the late Ex-Governor William H. Haile, who died February 13, 1901, and was succeeded by your present president, Mr. Charles H. Harding. To each of these gentlemen — wise counsellors, true friends, loyal and devoted representatives of the whole industry — I acknowledge my lasting obligations. One other friend, whose unfailing kindness to me, and whose intense zeal for the welfare of the Association can never be forgotten, was holding the office when I came to Boston, to which the unanimous vote of his associates has annually elected him ever since — I refer to Benjamin Phipps, the treasurer, who has long been the Nestor of the Association, who has kept with his own hand all its accounts for twenty years, and who has never failed it, in any emergency.

There has been during this interval a most remarkable mortality among the manufacturers who were prominent in the executive management of the organization when I became secretary. Of the members of the Executive Committee at that time only Mr. Whitman, James Dobson, of Philadelphia, David L. Einstein, of New York, and Mr. Phipps, remain in the board. From its membership there have passed away in the interval, besides the presidents I have named, such splendid representative manufacturers as Charles L. Harding, of Boston; George Maxwell, of Rockville; John L. Houston, of Hartford; Addison C. Miller, of Utica; Joseph Sawyer, of Boston; William C. Chapin, of Providence; Robert Middleton, of Utica; William H. Grundy, of Philadelphia, and Darius L. Goff, of Pawtucket.

The fourteen years of my service have been years of unbroken prosperity as a commercial organization. The roll of membership is larger to-day than it has been at any previous time during my incumbency; and while the expenses of the organization have somewhat increased, the point has been reached during the last two or three years, for the first time in its history, when the treasurer has been able to report each year a surplus in the treasury, and no debts outstanding.

Nat. Assoc. of Woolen Manufacturers Boston Mass.

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The Association is gaining slowly but surely; it is to-day more thoroughly representative of the whole wool manufacture of the United States than at any previous period in its history. Nevertheless, the membership ought to be increased, and with a full degree of co-operation on the part of the members it can be made to include nearly all the representative wool manufacturing establishments of the country. The responsibilities of membership are not lightly assumed; they have been accepted heretofore, almost invariably, with distinct recognition of the fact that the individual mill has a relationship to the whole industry, and has certain duties and obligations growing out of that relationship; in other words, that there is something more than a mere trade connection, a mere matter of making dividends for stockholders or profits for individual owners, involved in carrying on a manufacturing establishment — a semi-public side, which brings every mill into touch with the whole public, with the whole industrial autonomy of the nation, in its economic, social, and legislative relations; and that this semi-public responsibility can best be discharged by association and co-operation with other mills engaged in the same line of industry, — in an organization which can, on occasion, speak for all, secure for the industry its proper influence in public affairs, and discharge for its individual members, severally and collectively, their responsibility to the community as a whole.

The Bulletin of the Association, now in its thirty-third volume, has been regularly published, and has been somewhat increased in size and somewhat widened in scope. It has come to be recognized as the permanent repository of the economic literature of the textile industries, and as such is sought and prized in our university libraries and by economic students on both sides of the Atlantic. It has aided somewhat in the up-building of textile education in the United States, and in encouraging other movements which help to lift our textile manufacture to the highest level attained in European countries. It has been carrying in its pages for three years past the chapters of the first attempt yet made to write a connected history of the American

woolen manufacture; and this is a work that I hope and expect to be able to continue and complete. The Quarterly Bulletin has been a valuable and influential contribution to the technical and economic literature of our country, such as has come from no other commercial organization; and the Association will no doubt take just pride in continuing its publication indefinitely.

This period has been marked by three complete revisions of the tariff, each of moment to the wool manufacture. The secretary was hardly warm in his seat before the revision of 1890 was under way. It had been preceded by Secretary Windom's ruling, reversing the treasury classification of worsted goods, — the one feature of the tariff of 1882 which made prosperity impossible for the American wool manufacturer. Apart from the confirmation of this worsted classification, the wool manufacture gained nothing in the law of 1890 which was of real moment to it; and the immediate political reverse that followed, bringing with it complete business paralysis and the certainty of another tearing-up of the tariff, made the following years the most severe and trying, perhaps, the industry has ever encountered in this country. They covered the long and anxious months during which the Wilson tariff was in incubation; the violent readjustment of values which free wool necessitated; the utter stagnation of business which projected itself into the year 1897, when the criminal wrong done by the tariff of 1894 was righted, and substantially the same tariff as that of 1890, so far as wool and woolens were concerned, was again enacted.

Throughout these dramatic years the National Association of Wool Manufacturers was always at the fore-front; and it can safely be said, I think, that its management left nothing undone, by watchfulness, by argument, and by aggressiveness, to protect and to care for each branch of the industry. Generally, in these fast recurring emergencies, the Association faced them with united councils, but always with more or less friction, because of the impossibility of reconciling individual views on the subject of a duty on the raw material.

The uniform policy of the executive management of the Association on this subject has been to strive for the very best conditions of importation that were possible for the manufacturer, and consistent with a reasonable recognition of the claims and expectations of the domestic wool grower, — the only policy under which shipwreck of the Association could have been avoided, and the antagonism and hostility of the dominant political influences averted. It was a policy that encountered friction both internal and external; that involved the utmost tact and discretion at every point; and that ultimately snatched the flower of safety from the nettle of danger.

In spite of these adverse conditions; in spite of the wild speculation in wool that preceded the re-enactment of the wool duty; in spite of the frightful collapse in wool values that followed close upon the buoyant markets of 1899, the wool manufacture of the United States has succeeded in regaining all the ground it lost in these years, and it stands to-day in the full vigor of its maturity, capable of supplying all the requirements of our people, even the most exacting, fully abreast with the development of the industry in any country of the world, up-to-date in its methods and machinery, equal to the best in design and quality and ready for any innovation.

Nothing has appealed to me more forcibly, during these years, than the steady mechanical evolution I have witnessed in our woolen mills. I have seen the little, old-fashioned, antiquated woolen mills disappearing from the race very rapidly; and I have seen them replaced quite as rapidly by modern establishments, built in accordance with the latest methods of mill construction and equipped with the most modern machinery that can be procured at home or abroad.

It was my fortune, shortly after entering upon my duties as secretary, to be appointed to take the census of the wool manufacture in 1890. As revealed by that census, the bulk of the machinery and product of the industry was in woolen goods. At the census of 1900 it appeared that these conditions had been reversed, and now the worsted branch con-

sumes the larger part of the wool, and represents much the larger value of production. Nothing could more effectively demonstrate the enormous strides the industry has taken in the decade.

No one can tell what the future has in store for us; but I have an abiding faith that the experience of these fourteen years will not be soon forgotten by the American people. During these years, and notwithstanding the adverse conditions which marked so many of them, the United States has advanced with steady and determined steps to the foremost place among the manufacturing nations of the world; and among the many agencies which have contributed powerfully to make this possible the protective tariff has certainly been more potent than any other single one. This has been demonstrated in so many ways, and illustrated in so many separate industries, that it does not seem possible that the people will ever again, either in thoughtlessness or pique, or in response to partisan misrepresentation, vote a mandate to pull up the protective system by the roots. But that changes must come in existing schedules, to meet existing conditions, and that these changes must be undertaken by the friends of protection, and in the interests of protection, does not seem to admit of a question. The time to prepare for them will soon arrive; and then again the National Association of Wool Manufacturers will have opportunity to render incalculable service to the industry it guards. It is worth a thousand times what it has cost to keep the Association alive during six years of legislative quietude, to have the organization intact and well fortified behind its long and honorable experience, ready to meet the impending emergency as the representative of a united industry, and inured to conservative action.

If I have had any measure of success in my work for the National Association, I attribute it mainly to an endeavor to follow two rules of conduct laid down for me when I first came to Boston. The first rule was: As secretary, I was to treat all branches of the wool manufacture exactly alike, and to consider that each branch, and each member of the organ-

ization, irrespective of the relative size of the mill he represented, or the nature of the product he manufactured, was entitled to just as much consideration as any other branch, or any other member. I have striven to follow that rule, and I believe that it has been scrupulously adhered to in every attitude and policy of the Association during my incumbency.

The second rule was: In the advocacy of the cause of the wool manufacturer, wherever and under whatever circumstances, never to make a statement not wholly warranted by the facts. I suppose it was felt, because I came into the work out of the newspaper business, that this was a rule I had been trained to ignore, and that I was in need of special and serious caution in consequence. All of my education here has tended to impress upon me the vital necessity of exact and accurate statement of facts and figures. I have tried to take the lesson to heart, — to realize that I was not speaking under the cloak of an anonymous editor, nor in any individual capacity; that my words were to be taken, not as my own, but as the expression of the body of responsible citizens who make up this organization, and who are supposed to know and to mean what they say. Thanks to this constant warning and to much friendly assistance, I have been fortunate enough to commit the Association to no statement of fact which cannot be defended upon full reconsideration. Many things said in its name have been controverted, in the nature of things; nothing, so far as I am aware, has ever been shown to be false.

While on this subject, it may be well to recall the remark once made by my predecessor in a somewhat similar connection. What he said I can now repeat, that in all the years of my service it has never been suggested to the secretary by any member of the Association, or by any one else, that any member of Congress or any other person could or should be approached on any other ground or basis than the justice of the cause represented. Not a dollar of the funds of the Association has ever been expended for any other purpose than its necessary and legitimate expenses; and there is not

a page in its published or private records, in connection with tariff legislation or otherwise, which, if exposed to the public gaze to-day, would bring a blush of shame or even a feeling of regret to the cheek or the heart of any member. A man may be pardoned a feeling of pride that he has been deemed worthy to serve an organization with a record such as that.

I should like to conclude with a word that will convey some idea of the impressions I have received during my constant contact with wool manufacturers in this service. I have often thought that my part in the business partook a good deal of the character of the dress-parade. I have become deeply interested in the study of the economic and practical questions which daily confront the manufacturers: they are questions which increasingly demand the best thought of our best thinkers, and they are increasingly discussed in the press, in the pulpit, and on the platform. But I cannot help feeling that a lot of us are doing all the talking, while the manufacturers are in the thick of the battle. When one considers what the real position of the manufacturer has come to be in this country, — the trials and tribulations, the difficulties and embarrassments with which he has constantly to contend, — the trouble about credits, the cancellation of orders, the unforeseen changes in styles, the eccentricities of markets, the frictions of the mill, the labor question in all its forms, the ever-present problem of getting back a new dollar for an old one, — when one thinks of these things, of the anxieties they involve, the brains they require, the courage they demand, the risks and responsibilities they represent, — one feels like taking off his hat very humbly to the manufacturer. The world very dimly realizes what success in manufacturing has come to mean in these days. If the matter were better understood, we should have less flippant talk in the newspaper press, and wider and more generous recognition of the fact that the man who dedicates his life to manufacturing is doing his country a service, for which his rewards are too apt to be scant, uncertain, and inadequate.

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As I have met them in this Association, I have found the manufacturers as a rule — the exceptions have been striking, because of their rarity — patriotic citizens, to whom the welfare of the nation, the state, and the community of which they are a part, is always the first consideration. I have found them men generous with the increment of their labor in times of prosperity, and capable of bearing losses without complaint or discouragement when the markets are against them. I have seen many mills go down in the stress of these fourteen years; I have seen more fortunes lost than gained; I have seen anxiety and risk make men prematurely old, and I have witnessed many cases of fine courage and determination in restoring and rebuilding. The true philosophy of life is best exemplified in him who ventures everything he has in the conversion of a raw material into something more valuable, thus adding to the world's material advancement, and who accepts the results of his venture — the good and the bad together — and makes the best of it all. I take with me to my new duties a higher conception of individual responsibility, and a better understanding of the limitations of success, as the result of long association with gentlemen who have devoted their lives and their energies to the development of this great national industry of wool manufacture — the most perplexing, the most complicated, the most uncertain of them all, and yet with possibilities the most alluring and inspiring. For all I have learned from you, and all you have done for me, I thank you, one and all!

With the highest regard and respect,

July 1st, 1903.